



Castle Gap and the Pecos Frontier (Chisholm Trail Series)

Patrick Dearen

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True tales and tall ones come alive in "Castle Gap and the Pecos Frontier". Patrick Dearen of San Angelo is the author of this definitive, thoroughly documented study of six West Texas folk stories. Included are the stories of:

- Castle Gap, a break in a mesa some 12 miles east of the Pecos River, used by Comanches on the warpath, emigrants seeking California gold and cattlemen driving Longhorns up the Goodnight-Loving Trail;
- Horsehead Crossing, the most infamous ford of the Old West, considered the graveyard of hopes by drovers and emigrants alike;
- Juan Cordona Lake, the cast salt lake where sandstorms and skull-baking sun defied early efforts to mine the salt needed for everyday survival on the frontier;
- The "bulto" or ghost who wanders the Fort Stockton night in search of peace;
- Lost Wagon Train, a 40-wagon caravan entombed in the sand of West Texas;
- Will Sublett, who found a fortune in gold hidden in the Pecos Country and kept the secret of its location even unto death.

In the forward, Texas novelist Elmer Kelton, a lifelong resident of the Pecos River country, recalls the stories and legends he heard as a youngster and comments on the rich mixture of history and folklore they represent. Dearen's years of research into these now-aged mysteries and legends included personal visits with many resident and old-timers of the Pecos Frontier. A complete index lists everybody interviewed and quoted. In addition, he read yellowing newspapers and dusty court records and walked the country himself, finding the landmarks. From his search emerges a fascinating picture of an inhospitable land, its heritage and its people.

"Castle Gap and the Pecos Frontier", is illustrated with maps and both old and new photographs.

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